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Design + Build + Destroy = LEARNING! ***Student Learn about Bridge and Themselves.***



In many classes, students create and design solutions to problems. These very carefully crafted, intricate design solutions are proudly displayed for all to see. With a balsa wood bridge design competition, students design, build and then destroy their solutions – all for the sake of learning!

On Sunday, March 26th, Jared Stadtler, a seventh grade Brownsburg East Middle School (BEMS) Gateway to Technology (GTT) student, and Logan Day and Doug Day, eighth grade BEMS GTT CADRE members, traveled to the IUPUI Campus to participate in the 2006 IUPUI Bridge Design and Construction Expo. All three were anxious, and excited to see just how their bridges would hold up to the competition. In the end, Jared's design was awarded 3rd place. Even though Logan and Doug did not place, all three agreed that this was indeed a learning experience – from the beginning – to the competition – and even beyond.

All three boys were dedicated to their efforts. Each day at 6:30 a.m., Jared was in the school working on his bridge design. With advice and help from his father and his sponsor GTT teacher, Mrs. Chris Floyd, Jared worked tirelessly on his bridge – trying to balance a good design with limited weight. Jared's goal was strength in his design – and Jared himself was following this goal personally as well. He took up this pursuit on his own, and his dedication paid off in the end.

Logan and Doug are fixtures during lunch and after school in Mrs. Floyd's classroom, creating many different projects. The bridge was one of many! While they have never taken the GTT class, they are members of the GTT CADRE, which meets weekly at BEMS. Their original design was aesthetically pleasing, but not very functional. Over the course of the weekend, they redesigned, and came in on a Monday, ready to test their idea, and go for the final bridge design. While they did not place in the competition, there was plenty of talk of "what if" and "why don't we try", leading to more to come in the future from these two!

In the beginning, this seems to be a story about a balsa wood bridge competition. In the end, it is a story of how dedication, hard work and a spark of excitement can be a most powerful learning experience! How refreshing it is to see students taking their learning experiences in hand – and to the next level – for the sake of satisfying their desire to learn more – and of course, to have fun!



For more information visit <http://staffweb.brownsburg.k12.in.us/~cfloyd/gtt/indexfloyd.htm>